

Claims

We Claim:

1 1. A method for increasing a rate at which a chromium volume is
2 etched, said method comprising:

3 providing said chromium volume that includes chromium, said
4 chromium volume continuously contacted by an acid solution;

5 said chromium volume in continuous electrical contact with a
6 metallic body, wherein the metallic body is continuously
7 contacted by said acid solution; and

etching the chromium volume.

8 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein said chromium volume
includes an oxide of chromium and metallic chromium.

9 3. The method according to claim 1, wherein said metallic body
includes steel.

1 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein said acid solution
2 comprises hydrochloric acid.

1 5. The method according to claim 4, wherein said hydrochloric
2 acid solution has a molar concentration between about 0.3 and
3 about 6.

1 6. The method of claim 4, wherein said hydrochloric acid
2 solution is maintained at a temperature between about 35°C and
3 about 70°C.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the acid solution is
2 applied to the chromium layer as a spray.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the acid solution is
2 applied to the chromium layer in a dip bath.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the acid solution is a
2 mixture of sodium chloride (NaCl) and hydrochloric acid (HCl).

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the metallic body includes
2 steel, wherein the chromium volume includes metallic chromium,
3 wherein the acid solution includes hydrochloric acid, wherein a
4 temperature (T) and a molarity (M) of the hydrochloric acid is
5 within a triangular space defined by (T,M) points of (21 °C, 2.4
6 M), (52 °C, 2.4 M), and (52 °C, 1.2 M), and wherein the etch rate

is at least a factor of about 2 greater than an etch rate that would occur in an absence of the iron-comprising body.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the iron-comprising body includes steel, wherein the chromium volume includes metallic chromium, wherein the acid solution includes hydrochloric acid, wherein a temperature (T) and a molarity (M) of the hydrochloric acid is within a triangular space defined by (T,M) points of (21 °C, 2.4 M), (52 °C, 2.4 M), and (52 °C, 1.2 M), and wherein the etch rate is at least about 5 Å/second.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising forming hydrogen bubbles at a surface of the metallic body, said surface in contact with the acid solution.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein:
the metallic body includes steel;
the chromium volume includes an oxide of chromium and metallic chromium;
the acid solution comprises hydrochloric acid; and
the chromium volume is disposed upon a substrate, said substrate including a conductive metal, wherein selected areas of said conductive metal are exposed by the etching of the chromium

1 18. An electrical structure, comprising:
2 a chromium volume;
3 an iron-comprising body in continuous electrical contact
4 with the chromium volume; and
5 an acid solution in continuous contact with both the
6 chromium volume and the iron-comprising body, wherein the
7 chromium body is being etched at an etch rate.

1 19. The electrical structure of claim 18, wherein the chromium
2 volume includes an oxide of chromium and metallic chromium.

1 20. The electrical structure of claim 18, wherein the acid
2 solution includes hydrochloric acid in a liquid bath form.

1 21. The electrical structure of claim 18, wherein the acid
2 solution includes hydrochloric acid in a spray form.

1 22. The electrical structure of claim 18, wherein said
2 iron-comprising body includes steel.

1 23. The electrical structure of claim 18, further
2 comprising a layer of conductive metal, wherein the chromium

3 volume includes a layer of chromium, and wherein the layer of
4 chromium is on the layer of conductive metal.

1 24. The electrical structure of claim 18, wherein the acid
2 solution is not in contact with the layer of conductive metal.

1 25. The electrical structure of claim 24, wherein the iron-
2 comprising body includes steel, wherein the acid solution
3 includes hydrochloric acid, and wherein the layer of conductive
4 metal includes a metal selected from the group consisting of
5 copper, aluminum, nickel, silver, and gold.

1 26. The electrical structure of claim 18, further
2 comprising a layer of conductive metal, wherein the chromium
3 volume includes a layer of chromium, wherein the layer of
4 conductive metal is on the layer of chromium, wherein the
5 conductive metal includes an opening extending through its
6 thickness, wherein the opening exposes the layer of chromium,
7 wherein the iron-comprising body is in continuous electrical
8 contact with the chromium volume, and wherein the acid solution
9 is in contact with both the iron-comprising body and the chromium
10 volume within the opening.

27. The electrical structure of claim 26, wherein the iron-comprising body includes steel, wherein the acid solution includes hydrochloric acid, and wherein the layer of conductive metal includes a metal selected from the group consisting of copper, aluminum, nickel, silver, and gold.

28. The electrical structure of claim 18, wherein the iron-comprising body includes steel, wherein the chromium volume includes metallic chromium, wherein the acid solution includes hydrochloric acid, wherein a temperature (T) and a molarity (M) of the hydrochloric acid is within a triangular space defined by (T,M) points of (21 °C, 2.4 M), (52 °C, 2.4 M), and (52 °C, 1.2 M), and wherein the etch rate is at least a factor of about 2 greater than an etch rate that would occur in an absence of the iron-comprising body.

29. The electrical structure of claim 18, wherein the iron-comprising body includes steel, wherein the chromium volume includes metallic chromium, wherein the acid solution includes hydrochloric acid, wherein a temperature (T) and a molarity (M) of the hydrochloric acid is within a triangular space defined by (T,M) points of (21 °C, 2.4 M), (52 °C, 2.4 M), and (52 °C, 1.2 M), and wherein the etch rate is at least about 5 Å/second.

1 30. The electrical structure of claim 18, further comprising a
2 flouropolymer dielectric volume bonded to said chromium volume.

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